

A
P R O S P E C T
O F
D E A T H :
A
Pindarique Essay.

Written by the Right Honourable the late Earl
of R O S C O M M O N.

—*Omneis una manet nox,
Et Calcanda semel via Leti.*

Hor.

L O N D O N :

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PROSPECT

OF

DEATH:

A

Pindarique Essay.

Written by the Right Honourable the late Earl
of ROSSGOMMON.

—Omnium est finis mors—
Et Calceus pendet viri latus.

Hoc



Printed by J. Gordon, 14, St. John Street, near
Stations, MDCCIV.

THE
P R E F A C E
TO THE
R E A D E R.

THis most Celebrated and Ingenious Author (whose Works already extant) have met with so General an Applause from the Learned, that it is not to be doubted, but this will meet with the like Venerable Esteem. The Subject is a Prospect of Death: However amazing the Prospect, yet as amazingly well perform'd by him; and indeed He seems to have described it with that Vigour and Life, as if he had purposely entered into that melancholy State and risen again from it, to tell Us what it was; and as this Honourable Author was bless'd with the most correct and lostly Poets Style, so His thoughts were always happily employed upon the noblest Subjects: And such is the Presents, which very well deserves our most serious Thoughts and Contemplations, and that more especially at this time, when Death has so lately appear'd to Us with so much Horror and amazement, and presented Herself to our view in theghastly Ideas of Hurricanes and Tempests: The Winds and Storms, the Air and Seas fulfilling her Decrees, and calling aloud to Careless and Unthinking Mankind, to prepare to receive Her Summons: 'Tis in this Astonishing Language, She chuses to Appeal to Atheists and Deists, to rouse and awaken them, (if possible,) out of their Fatal Lethargy and Insensibility, to look into another World; which if they will not believe, and be convinced of here, to make them at least with Caligula, in the midst of his Thunder, to Tremble at the thoughts of it.

And

The Preface to the Reader.

And since this Course of Things seem'd to us so near to be dissolv'd, surely 'tis worth their while, for their own security, to think of that Blessed State, which alone is immoveable and unshaken, where there are no Groans or Sighs of Expiring Nature, no Storms or Furies to ruffle or discompose us; but all above is Serene and Quiet, Peaceable and Eternal. To Qualify us for that perfect and undisturb'd Enjoyment, is the Design of this Poem; which, since it Courts us to look beyond the Grave, into a milder Climate, and a better Air, and there to be Happy, We cannot but accept of as well meant to Us.

Oh therefore that Men were but Wise, that they would but consider their Latter End!

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PROSPECT

DEATH.

I
SINCE We can Dye but once, and after Death
 Our State no Alteration knows ;
 But when we have resign'd our Breath,
 Th' Immortal Spirit goes
 To endless Joys, or everlasting Woes.
 Wise is that Man, who labours to secure
 That mighty, and important Stake:
 And by all Methods strives to make
 His Passage safe, and his Reception sure.
 Meerly to dye, no Man of Reason fears ;
 For certainly we must
 As we are Born, return to Dust :
 'Tis the last Point of many lingring Years.
 But whether then we go,
 Whether, we fain wou'd know :
 But Humane Understanding cannot show.

This makes us Tremble ; and Creates
Strange Apprehensions in the Mind,
Fills it with restless doubts, and wild debates
Concerning what, we, living, cannot find.

None know what Death is, but the Dead:
Therefore we all, by nature, Dying dread,
As a strange, doubtful Way, we know not how to tread.

II.

When to the Margin of the Grave we come,
And scarce have one black painful Hour to live,
No Hopes, no Prospect of a kind Reprieve,
To stop our speedy Passage to the Tomb.

How moving, and how mournful is the Sight,
How wondrous pittiful, how wondrous sad,
Where then is Refuge, where is Comfort to be had
In the dark Minutes of the dreadful Night,
To cheer our drooping Souls for their amazing Flight?
Feeble, and languishing in Bed we lye,
Despairing to recover, void of Rest,
Wishing for death, and yet afraid to dye;
Terrors and Doubts distract our Breast,
With mighty Agonies, and mighty Pains oppress.

III.

Our Face is moisten'd with a clammy Sweat :
Faint, and irregular the Pulses beat.
The Blood unactive grows,
And thickens as it flows;
Depriv'd of all its Vigour ; all its Vital Heat.
Our dying Eyes rowl heavily about,
Their Lights just going out ;

And

And for some kind assistance call,

But Pity, useless Pity's all

Our Weeping Friends can give,

Or we receive:

Tho' their Desires are great, their Powers are small.

The Tongue's unable to declare

The Pains, the Griefs, the Miserys we bear:

How insupportable our Torments are.

Musick no more delights our deafning Ears,

Restores our Joys, or dissipates our Fears.

But all is Melancholly, all is Sad,

In Robes of deepest Mourning clad.

For every Faculty, and every Sense

Partakes the Woe of this dire Exigence.

IV.

Then we are sensible, too late,

'Tis no advantage to be rich, or great:

For all the fulsom Pride, and Pageantry of State

No Consolation brings.

Riches, and Honours then are useless things,

Tasteless, or bitter all,

And like the Book, which the Apostle Eat,

To their ill Judging Pallate sweet:

But turn at last, to Nauseousness, and Gall.

Nothing will then our drooping Spirits cheer,

But the Remembrance of good Actions past.

Vertue's a Joy that will for ever last,

And makes pale Death less terrible appear;

Takes out his baneful Sting, and palliates our Fear.

In the dark *Anti-Chamber* of the Grave

What wou'd we give, ev'n all we have,

All that our Care, and Industry had gain'd,
 All that our Fraud, our Policy, or Art obtain'd:
 Cou'd we recall those fatal hours again,
 Which we consum'd in senseless Vanities,
 Ambitious Follies, and Luxurious ease;
 For then they urge our Terrors, and increase our Pain.

V.

Our Friends, and Relatives stand weeping by,
 Dissolv'd in Tears to see us dye,
 And plunge into the deep Abyss of wide Eternity.
 In vain They mourn, in vain they grieve,
 Their Sorrows cannot ours relieve.
 They pity our deplorable Estate,
 But what, alas, can pity do
 To soften the decrees of Fate?

Besides, the Sentence is Irrevocable too.

All their Endeavours to preserve our Breath,
 Tho' they do unsuccessful prove,
 Shew us how much, how tenderly they Love;
 But cannot cut off the Entail of Death.
 Mournful they look; and croud about our Bed,
 One with officious haste,
 Brings us a Cordial, we want sence to tast;
 Another softly raises up our head,
 This wipes away the Sweat, that sighing cries,
 See what Convulsions, what strong Agonies,
 Both Soul and Body undergo,
 His Pains no Intermission know:
 For every gasp of Air he draws returns in sighs.
 Each wou'd his kind assistance lend,
 To serve his dear Relation, or his dearer Friend,
 But still in vain with Destiny they all contend.

VI.

Our Father, pale with Grief and Watching grown,
Takes our cold Hand in his, and cryes adieu,
Adieu, my Child, now I must follow you;

Then Weeps, and gently lays it down.

Our Sons, who in their tender Years
Were objects of our Cares, and of our Fears,
Come trembling to our Bed, and kneeling cry,
Bless us, O Father! Now before you dye;
Bless us, and be you Bless'd to all Eternity.

Our Friend, whom equal to our selves we love,
Compassionate, and kind,

Crys, will you leave me here behind,
Without me fly to the blest Seats above?

Without me did I say? Ah, no!

Without thy Friend thou can'st not go;
For tho' thou leav'st me groveling here below,
My Soul with thee shall upward fly,
And bear thy Spirit Company

Thro' the bright Passage of the yielding Sky.
Ev'n Death that parts thee from thy self, shall be
Incapable to seperate

(For 'tis not in the power of Fate)

My Friend, my best, my dearest Friend and me.
But since it must be so, Farewel,
For ever? No, for we shall meet agen,
And live like Gods, tho' now we dye like Men,
In the Fternal Regions where Just Spirits dwell.

VII.

The Soul unable longer to maintain,

The fruitless and unequal Strife;
Finding her weak Endeavours vain,

C

To

To keep the Counterscarp of Life :
 By slow degrees retires towards the Heart,
 And Fortifies that little Fort,
 With all the kind Artilleries of Art ;
Botanick Legions Guarding every Port.
 But *Death*, whose Arms no Mortal can repel,
 A formal Siege disdains to lay ;
 Summons his fierce Battallions to the Fray,
 And in a Minute Storms the feeble Cittadel.
 Sometimes We may Capitulate, and he
 Pretends to make a solid Peace,
 But 'tis all Sham, all Artifice,
 That we may Negligent and Careless be :
 For if his Armys are withdrawn to day,
 And We believe no Danger near,
 But all is peaceable, and all is clear,
 His Troops return some unsuspected way ;
 While in the soft Embrace of Sleep we lye,
 The Secret Murderers Stab us, and we dye.
 Since our First Parents fall,
 Inevitable Death descends on all,
 A Portion none of Humane Race can miss ;
 But that which makes it sweet, or bitter, is
 The fears of Misery, or certain hopes of Bliss :
 For when the Impenitent, and Wicked dye,
 Loaded with Crimes and Infamy ;
 If any Sense at that sad Time remains,
 They feel amazing Terrors, mighty Pains,
 The Earnest of that vast stupendious Woe,
 Which they to all Eternity must undergo ;
 Confin'd in Hell with everlasting Chains.
 Infernal Spirits hover in the Air,

Like

Like ravenous Wolves to seize upon their Pray,
 And hurry the departed Souls away
 To the dark Receptacles of Dispair;
 Where they must dwell till that Tremendous Day,
 When the loud Trump shall call them to appear
 Before a Judge most Terrible, and most Severe:

By whose just Sentence they must go,
 To Everlasting Pains, and Endless Woe;
 Which always are Extream, and always will be so.

VIII.

But the Good Man, whose Soul is pure,
 Unspotted, Regular, and Free
 From all the ugly Stains of Lust, and Villany;
 Of Mercy, and of Pardon sure;
 Looks thro' the Darkness of the glooming Night,
 And sees the Dawning of a glorious Day;
 Sees Crouds of Angels ready to convey

His Soul when e're she takes her Flight,
 To the surprizing Mansions of Immortal Light:
 Then the Coelestial Guards around him stand;
 Nor suffer the black Demons of the Air
 To oppose his Passage to the promis'd Land;
 Or terrifie his Thoughts with wild Despair,
 But all is calm within, and all without is Fair.

His Prayers, his Charity, his Vertues press
 To plead for Mercy when he wants it most;
 Not one of all the happy Member's lost:
 And those bright Advocates ne're want Success,
 But when the Soul's releas'd from dull Mortality,
 She passes up in Triumph thro' the Sky,
 Where She's united to a glorious Throng
 Of Angels, who, with a Coelestial Song,
 Congratulate her Conquest as She flies along.

If therefore all must quit the Stage,
 When, or how soon we cannot know ;
 But late, or early, we are sure to go,
 In the fresh Bloom of Youth, or Wither'd Age.
 We cannot take too sedulous a Care
 In this Important, Grand Affair.
 For as we dye, we must remain,
 Hereafter all our Hopes are vain
 To make our Peace with Heaven, or to return again.
 The *Heathen*, who no better understood,
 Than what the light of Nature taught, declar'd ;
 No future Miseries could be prepar'd
 For the Sincere, the Merciful, the Good ;
 But if there was a State of Rest,
 They shou'd with the same Happiness be blest,
 As the Immortal Gods, if Gods there were, possess'd.
 We have the promise of Eternal Truth,
 Those who live well, and pious Paths pursue,
 To Man, and to their Maker true,
 Let them Expire in Age or Youth,
 Can never miss
 Their way to Everlasting Bliss :
 But from a World of Misery and Care,
 To Mansions of Eternal Ease repair :
 Where Joy in full Perfection flows,
 No Interruption, no Cessation knows :
 But in a Mighty Circle round for ever goes.

